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THE VOTER

VOL. 11, NO. 3

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

APRIL 1994

INTERVIEWING MAINE'S LEGISLATORS

During the next two and a half months the League will embark on the daunting task of interviewing as many legislators as possible for our State Government Study. All League members will receive a copy of the questionnaire with a letter requesting assistance with the interview process. The five Questionnaire Coordinators are:

Portland Area: Alison Smith, Tel. 879-7440
43 Carleton St., Portland ME 04102
Brunswick Area: Ruth Irwin, Tel. 729-1413
RR 2, Box 200, S. Harpswell ME 04709
Ellsworth: Ethel Schwalbe, Tel. 546-7436
RR 1, Box 137-B, Steuben ME 04680
Mt. Desert: Phyllis Charpentier, Tel. 244-5212
Box 22, Mt. Desert ME 04660
MALs: Nellik Doble, Tel. 359-4433
Brooklin ME 04616



To participate call your Questionnaire Coordinator with the name of the legislator you would be willing to interview. If you have no preference, you may ask for a choice of assignments. When you set a date for your interview, let your Questionnaire Coordinator know and she will send a copy of the questionnaire along with a cover letter to the legislator. We hope to range wide to get interviews from legislators from many parts of Maine. Ruth Moss, Chair of the State Government Study Committee, will oversee the compilation of the completed questionnaires. The names of individual legislators will not be used in the compilation.

We need your help. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know some of our legislators and gather a better understanding of how the legislative process works in Augusta. Please give your Questionnaire Coordinator a call.

Janice Carpenter
State Government Study Committee

QUAD STATE COUNCIL -- APRIL 30-MAY 1

Information will be sent to all members regarding registration and reservations for Council in Vermont. It would be very gratifying to see a number of you there to share in the program and camaraderie.

It is always a rewarding experience to interact with other League members in our four New England states. A small portion of the time is devoted to our own state business, such as adopting the budget for 1994-95 and deciding where to focus our resources and energies in the coming year. Most of the program is meant to inform and encourage us in our worthwhile efforts.

From the President



We were not snowed out on February 1 for our Keys to the Capitol day, which, as you know, could easily have happened this year. It was a good day for those in attendance and, as usual, a very productive day. We learned much from the panelists about the regulatory process, a subject with which most of us are only vaguely familiar. (The regulatory process begins after bills have passed and become law.) The reception in the Blaine House again provided a pleasant ending to the day. You all should have seen the spectacular centerpiece on the tea table that Jana Lapoint had provided! I only wish many more of you could have been there.

The League's continuing work on environmental issues has resulted in the appointment of Carol Fritz to a CONEG (Council of North East Governors) committee working toward waste reduction as well as toxics in packaging. The committee has issued a challenge to selected companies to reduce their product packaging.

I have been asked to serve on the Citizen Bee Steering Committee organized by the Secretary of State's office. The Citizen Bee is a citizen education program and a national academic competition for ninth-through-twelfth-grade students. Regional competitions are conducted by Bill Diamond's office and held in regional high schools. Winners receive savings bonds and the state winner competes in Washington, D.C. in a national competition which awards substantial scholarships to the top finalists.

A very timely conference was held in Brunswick in mid-March. The two-day meeting focused solely on campaign finance reform. Invited participants represented a broad spectrum of interests in Maine which included the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, AFL/CIO, Christian Civic League, United We Stand, Maine Citizen Leadership Fund and Citizens for Term Limits. The obvious purpose of the meeting was to bring these groups together--as well as a number of others--to share a common interest and concern regarding campaign finance reform. Discussion covered current practices, problems, concerns and solutions. Conferees agreed that the Planning Committee, of which the League is a member, should continue to explore areas of reform on which there was substantial agreement at the conference.

The League of Women Voters of Maine continues to be active in the Maine Choice Coalition and the Women's Legislative Action Coalition. We are also cosponsors with AARP/VOTE of two gubernatorial candidates' forums, in Portland on April 22, and in Bangor on May 6.

The Health Care Committee has been extremely busy organizing the Health Care Forum and working with cosponsors for the event. That Forum will have taken place by now but other meetings will be scheduled in order to continue to bring health care reform information to areas outside of Portland.

In closing, I would like to urge you to consider attending Quad State Council (Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) in Vermont this year. It is a wonderful way to learn more about what is happening in our region as well as having a chance to enjoy the company of other League members. EVERYONE is welcome! It is time and money well spent in very pleasant surroundings.

--- Marion Holshouser

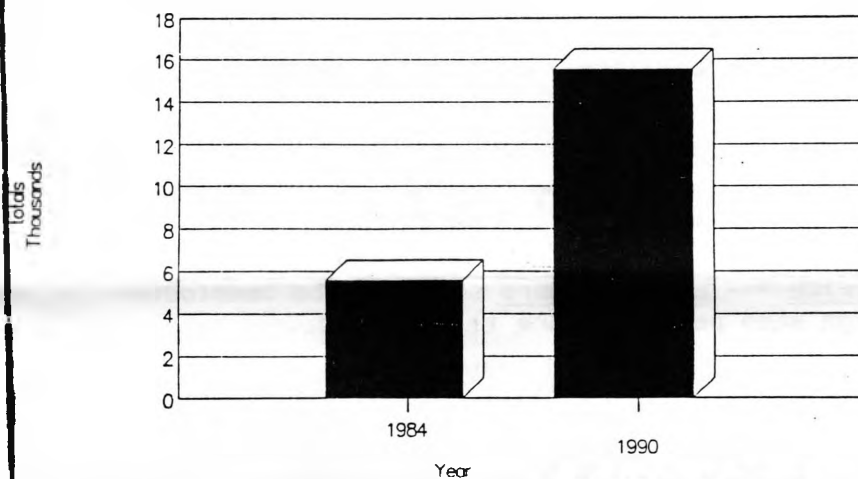
PRIVATE MONEY IN PUBLIC ELECTIONS

As her president's report (Page 2) indicates, the Maine League recently cosponsored and Marion recently participated in a conference on Campaign Finance Reform. The two charts below are from a handout at that conference, and were prepared by the Maine Citizen Leadership Fund and the Maine People's Resource Center.

The average cost of Maine Senate races (\$15,516 in 1990) has tripled since 1984, and is astounding when compared with a Maine state senator's two-year salary of just \$18,000. Who is paying these electoral costs? Very few people, according to the Resource Center. Even though the bottom chart reflects data on less than half of the legislators (and the editor has no information on how those legislators were selected) the data make a strong case for public financing. Contributions over \$50 came from 1,688 individuals. With 870,542 registered voters in the state, those donors represent less than two-tenths of one percent of Maine's registered voters.

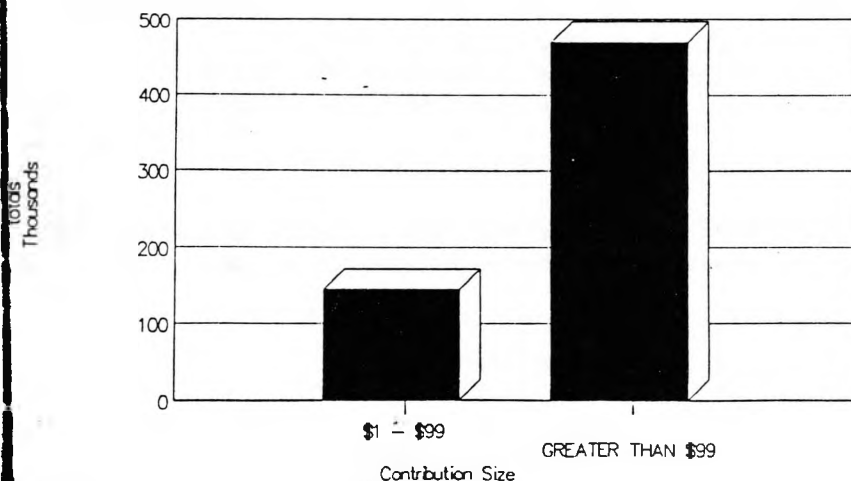
COST OF MAINE SENATE RACES

1984 - 1990



TOTAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

BY SIZE OF DONATION



THE LETTER

Did you receive it? Did you read it? The Maine League's fundraising request letter to all members? The League counts on additional contributions from its members to meet essential expenses. (Your membership fee--still low in comparison to many organizations is divided between national, state and local Leagues.)

If you haven't already responded, please seriously consider the need.

PRIMARY ELECTIONS SOON

It's important to vote in the June primaries. Don't let others make the decisions for you.

Marion Holshouser reminds all members that the Maine League has a non-partisan policy (printed below.) Remember, the League is a non-partisan organization. The policy in no way discourages political activity by members except for those in sensitive Board positions.

NON-PARTISAN POLICY

1. ELECTED OFFICE --- Board members shall not be candidates for State partisan office and must resign when petitions are filed.
2. POLITICAL PARTY OFFICE --- The president and voter service chair shall not serve in any position in a political party. Board members shall not serve as officers of a political party at the state level and shall abide by the local League's non-partisan policy regarding holding local party positions.
3. CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS --- All board members may attend fundraising events and make campaign contributions.
4. POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS --- The president and voter service chair shall not chair or administer fundraising or political campaigns, chair a campaign event or work in a significant way in the campaign of a candidate for federal or state office. Other board members may undertake such activities for candidates for state or local office after consultation with the presidents and board of the local leagues involved.
5. ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION --- Board members shall present questions about specific situations to the state board where the foregoing policies do not resolve the question.

PALs ENVIRONMENTAL SHOPPING CAMPAIGN

The Portland Area League has a full-scale campaign in swing to help Portland area shoppers be more environmentally aware and friendly. League members lead Environmental Shopping Tours, have conducted educational programs at schools, law firms, churches, garden clubs, and Brownie troops--to date--and have developed a four-fold "Environmental Shopping" brochure with a wonderful cover design--half of the globe (world) as a shopping basket.

"Recycling is not enough" warns the brochure, and adds "Reject" and "React" to the original 3 R's of waste reduction:

REDUCE : the amount of trash

REUSE : containers and products

RECYCLE : as much as possible

REJECT : excessive packaging, non-recyclable packaging, and products harmful to the environment

REACT : with your shopping dollars and votes



Detailed suggestions under the two new "R's" include these:

REJECT :

- Toxic Household Products. Buy only what you need and try less toxic alternatives
- Non-recyclable packaging such as mixed material plastics. juice boxes*, blister packs
- Non-biodegradable packaging such as polystyrene (styrofoam) and plastic bags
- Products harmful to the environment:
 - aerosol cans (use pump sprays)
 - cleaning products containing toxics, like furniture polish, drain cleaners, toilet cleaners, silver and copper cleaners (try baking soda instead)
 - detergents and cleaners containing phosphates (use vegetable based soap instead)
 - chlorine-bleached paper products like coffee filters and paper towels
 - regular batteries (use rechargeable)
 - mothballs (use cedar)
 - pesticides

REACT :

- Call or write manufacturers to comment. Information found on most packages.
- Use your shopping dollars to send a message.
- Ask store managers to stock environmentally friendly products.
- Let government officials know your concerns - call, write, and VOTE

*Editor's note: And keep holding your Maine legislators' feet to the fire on the juice box issue. Keep asking how the tetrapack manufacturers are coming with their promise to provide recycling facilities convenient to Maine towns--and what the legislature is doing or will do if the manufacturers' progress is not satisfactory or their "recycling cost absorption" as complete as they implied it would be when they lobbied for lifting of the ban.

STATUS OF MAINE HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION

(As of March 29, 1994)

There are two health care bills currently before the Legislature, LD 1285 and LD 1985.

LD 1285 "An Act to Provide Family Security Through Quality, Affordable Health Care" was recently reported out of the Banking and Insurance Committee with a 7 to 5 "ought to pass" vote. This is the bill introduced early in 1993 by Senator Dale McCormick and Representative Charlene Rydell and held over for this year's session. It agrees with all of the major points in the League's position on health care reform and was supported by a statement prepared by Ruth Benedikt and read by Sally Bryant at the public hearing in Portland last spring. The Governor has said that he would veto this bill if it is passed by the Legislature.

As a result of the veto threat and in order to obtain wider support for health care reform, the Legislative Leadership, the Banking and Insurance Committee, the Governor's office and the Sponsors put together a new bill which has an excellent chance of passing and being signed. This bill, LD 1985 "An Act to Create the Maine Health Care Authority", was reported by Representative Pineau for the Banking and Insurance Committee. It is viewed as a replacement for LD 1285 and has received bi-partisan support. Following is the summary of LD 1985 as contained in the bill itself:

"STATEMENT OF FACT"

"This bill establishes the Maine Health Care Reform Commission, the goal of which is to create alternative comprehensive health care proposals for consideration by the 117th Legislature, providing access to health care for all Maine citizens by July 1, 1997.

The commission consists of 3 appointed members, who serve part time for the duration of the work of the commission. The commission may employ unclassified confidential employees or contract for the services of professional and support staff. Meetings of the commission are public meetings and records of the commission are public records within the meaning of the freedom of access laws. The commission is funded from the General Fund and may apply for grants and awards from foundations and other public and private sources.

This bill charges the commission with bringing back to the Governor, the Legislature and the public a report and implementing legislation on at least 3 models for health care reform and a proposal for a uniform data collection system. The commission must report on 3 models for health care reform: a multi-payor model that provides health insurance coverage for the citizens of the State, a single-payor model that provides health insurance coverage for all citizens of the State and a model based on the present health care system that incorporates managed care and other mechanisms to control costs and to improve access for uninsured citizens of the State.

This bill requires the commission to develop a program for public participation and education, involving all interested citizens, parties and groups. The public participation and education program must begin early in the work of the commission and continue through the presentation of legislation to the Governor and the Legislature.

This bill takes effect July 20, 1994."

With adjournment not far off, LD 1285 will probably not stimulate much discussion before being shelved. One might, however, anticipate its re-appearance in modified form as the single-payor model called for in LD 1985. If the latter becomes law as anticipated, the future of health care reform in Maine will then depend on how well the Maine Health Care Reform Commission carries out the mandate described above. It would be the responsibility of the League to make its voice heard in the selection of the three Commissioners and in monitoring their subsequent activities to ensure that the League's position on health care will have the desired impact on what happens in Maine!

Prepared by William B. Bryant
Brunswick Area League

THE NURSE PRACTITIONER BILL LD 1185

A constant refrain in the health care debate has been "the shortage of primary care physicians." For over ten years, Maine has experienced a shortage of 150^{or-} primary care physicians. LD 1185, "An Act to Increase Access to Primary Care by Redefining the Practice of Advanced Nursing" addressed that shortage with proposals for greater freedom of nurses in advanced practice in treating patients.

For months, Nurses in Advanced Practice have been negotiating with the Maine Medical Association over the provisions of LD 1185, in the hope of obtaining the Association's support. Among the many compromises reached are these:

ON COLLABORATION:

--Nurses will not practice independently; doctors and nurses will work on collaboration. (Maine will join 24 other states that have collaboration for nurses in advanced practice.)

(Presently there are 16 states that permit independence of nurses in advanced practice. New Hampshire has had independent practice [much more liberal than LD 1185 proposes] since 1976 with no increase in malpractice.)

ON THE JOINT HEALTH COUNCIL:

--The Joint Health Council will govern nursing in advanced practice by bringing together physicians, nurses, and a pharmacist who will together address areas of safety.

ON LIABILITY:

--Doctors will not be forced to collaborate with nurses.

--Nurses will carry the same amount in malpractice insurance as doctors.

--Under LD 1185 doctors will be liable only when:

--Nurse Practitioner is an employee (same as current law)

--If doctor takes care of patient him/herself (same as current law)

--Doctor has given bad advice to the nurse* (same as current law)

--Doctors will have less liability under LD 1185.

*Recently the Maine Medical Association introduced a new definition of liability that would grant the physician immunity from liability even if he/she gave the nurse bad advice concerning the care of a patient.

The foregoing is taken from information provided by Portland League member Charlotte Wilbur.

THE ANONYMOUS NURSE (from a letter in the NYTimes, April 1, 1994, commenting on the photograph accompanying an article on controlling medical costs. The letter writer was male.)

"Two male physicians and a male pharmacist, all identified by name, confer around a computer screen. In the background a female nurse, identified only as 'a nurse,' attends to the partly obscured cardiac patient.

"It is possible to overread the symbolic character of such a photograph, but the way the men's primary attention is focused on a technological device, while the unidentified woman's attention is focused on the human patient, only reinforces the impression that medicine is dominated by men who direct their primary attention to machines and cost-benefit abstractions, rather than to patients. In such a medical system, patients are left to hope for the attention of nurses, whose subordinate status denies them even the respect a name confers.

"Those of us who worry about the American medical system...ought to post that photograph on our bulletin boards as a reminder of stereotypes that threaten to undermine whatever advances have been made in the humane practice of medicine."

THANK YOU, everyone who made our 1994 KEYS TO THE CAPITOL a success.

The Committee (Jean Fine, Janice Carpenter, Alice Conkey, Joan Saxe and Ann Schink) did a superb job (typical League result) and deserves our sincere thanks. Thanks, too, to Phyllis Charpentier and Dorothy Zucker for hosting the reception at the Blaine House and to Jana Lapoint for the strikingly beautiful centerpiece of tulips.
(Marion Holshouser)



THE "BAG BILL"

"Our grocery bill was bagged by the Taxation Committee. We (League committee) have agreed to continue to work with the Maine State Management team and various community leaders to educate the community on the need to reduce bag waste by re-using."
(From the Portland Area League BULLETIN.)

BACKGROUND; Concerned over the environmental impacts of the use of excess paper and plastic grocery bags, the Portland Area League (PAL) last year introduced a bill as an amendment to the (previously enacted) Solid Waste Management Act. The bill would have required grocery store customers to bring reusable grocery bags to the store. If customers forgot or refused, the store could sell them a paper or plastic bag. (Small plastic bags for fruits and vegetables would continue to be free.) The bill proposed that money from the in-store sale of bags could be returned to each community (based on population) to be earmarked for environmental education, projects or equipment.

(ED. NOTE; Do YOU always remember to take your reusable grocery bags to the store?)



JEAN SMITH, Co-coordinator for our state League's Members-at-Large (MALs), served on the panel of judges for the Fifth Annual Maine Women's Hall of Fame award. "The Maine Women's Hall of Fame is dedicated to women who have made an outstanding contribution to improving opportunities for all Maine Women. The induction ceremony is in observance of Women's History Month."

The 1994 inductee was Esther Elizabeth Wood, author, journalist and (former) Professor of History at Gorham State Teachers College (the present University of Southern Maine).



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters sent to the VOTER Editor will be accepted from LWV members, based on space and appropriateness to current LWV program. Letters must be limited to no more than 100 words, in addition to the author's name, address, phone number and LWV affiliation.

WARNING ! (From a letter in the NYTimes, January 10, 1994)

"As a student of public health, I was startled to read that Dr. William B. Kannel, one of the researchers in the Framingham study, believes that 'men with highly educated wives who work outside the home faced a greater risk of suffering and dying of a heart attack than did men with less educated wives.' These women, says Dr. Kannel, are not nurturing enough and fail to cook dinner every night for their husbands."

.....
"Public health policy would be better served if he were to recommend that these men cook dinner themselves (how's that for nurturing?), exercise or eat a heart-healthy meal at their favorite restaurant."

LEAGUE VOTER SERVICE PUBLICATIONS BEING UPDATED

Because supplies of many of our publications are running very low, the State Board determined that we should reprint five of them. These include How a Bill Becomes a Law, This is Your Legislature (the two most frequently requested), Courts of Maine, County Government, and Executive Branch. All of these were last printed in 1986, so it seemed prudent to have each one "vetted" by knowledgeable persons to be sure that the information we print will be correct and up-to-date.

Janice Carpenter has been sleuthing for experts to check on How a Bill... and the Executive Branch; Marion Holshouser persuaded Judge Harriet Henry to look over the Courts brochure, and Lorraine Fleury, our friend lately in the Secretary of State's Office, went over This is Your Legislature with a fine-tooth comb.

Unfortunately for our desire to accomplish this project speedily, it seems that the current legislature may pass some bills that could affect our information before it adjourns March 31. So Janice, who has taken on, in her usual willing way, the job of preparing the camera-ready copy for the printers, is waiting until early April to be sure we include the latest appropriate legislation. Our goal is to have 500 copies of each of six brochures ready to deliver to Girls' State in early June.

The Federal Elections Commission made available to us several hundred copies of their brochure The \$3 Tax Checkoff. These were distributed to libraries throughout the state by Richard Arnold of the Maine State Library, for which we are grateful. A number of copies are still on hand, and may be obtained by writing me.

There is also an ample supply of League bookmarks which are good advertising to place in local libraries. If you would like to take some to your library, just call or write me.

--Alice W. Conkey
State Publications Chair
53 Ward Circle, Brunswick 04011
729-5289

"As of Friday [March 18], the nightly news on ABC, CBS and NBC had devoted 220 minutes to Whitewater this year, nearly three times as much as for health care, according to Andrew Tyndall, whose Tyndall Report monitors TV news." (From an OpEd column in the NYTimes, March 23)



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COMPARISON OF CLINTON & COOPER/BREAUX HEALTH REFORM BILLS

	CLINTON BILL	COOPER/BREAUX BILL
Coverage	All citizens and legal residents are covered by January 1, 1998.	There is no requirement for coverage.
Benefits Package	All non-Medicare enrollees in the alliances receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hospital services •Health professional services •Primary and preventive services •Prescription drugs •Mental health and substance abuse services (with limits) •Durable medical equipment •Dental and eyeglasses for those under 18 •Hospice care for the terminally ill 	Standard benefits are not defined. A National Health Board will recommend a uniform set of benefits for Congressional approval without modification.
Long-term Care	New home and community based care program. Raises Medicaid asset limit and personal needs allowance for nursing home care and improves standards for private long-term care insurance.	No new long-term care program. Eliminates all federal spending for Medicaid long-term care. States design and pay for all long-term care.
Cost Containment	Limits on insurance premium increases are established to limit overall growth. Some savings from administrative streamlining, malpractice reform and increased competition.	No limits on insurance premiums. Some savings from administrative streamlining, malpractice reform and increased competition.
Financing	In addition to premiums paid by employers and employees (with subsidies for unemployed), revenues are collected through projected savings in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, sin taxes, and a 1% payroll tax on corporations who run their own alliances.	Individuals pay unless employers elect to pay premiums. Limits the employer's tax deductibility of employer-provided health benefits. Savings in Medicare and Medicaid programs.
Medicare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Expands Medicare to provide new prescription drug benefit •Requires all doctors to accept Medicare assignment •Reduces overall Medicare spending in tandem with reductions in health care spending for the population under age 65 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No new Medicare prescription drug coverage •Medicare assignment still optional
Early Retirees	Retirees (55-65 years old) only pay up to 20% of premium.	No new benefit.

Furnished by Charlotte Wilbur.
Thank you, Charlotte

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(202) 737-6340
As of January 7, 1994

"ADVANCING JUSTICE" IN ELLSWORTH



Last year's "Deciding Justice" series was so well received in Ellsworth that participants asked the League to develop and sponsor a similar program on the Supreme Court and civil liberties for 1994. Thanks to Ruth Moss' energy and persistence, the program is now a reality.

Titled "Advancing Justice" this time, the program brings back Dr. Timothy Cole, political science professor at the University of Maine, Orono to be the lecturer/discussion leader. Last year's participants credited Dr. Cole--his enthusiasm for and knowledge of the subjects--with the success of the program. The discussions will again be held at the Ellsworth Public Library (Alternate Saturdays at 1 p.m.) and a supply of books for preliminary reading (optional) will be available to participants.

Major funding for the program is by the Maine Humanities Council (a grant of \$3,445) with additional funding from the Maine State Bar Association. The Maine State Library joins the League and the Ellsworth Public Library as sponsor.

Here are the topics and reading list:

April 9 -- "At the Eye of the Storm: The Supreme Court and American Politics." David O'Brien's Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics.

April 23 -- "A Free Press and Libel: The New York Times case." Anthony Lewis' Make No Law.

May 7 -- "Jim Crow Goes to Court: Segregation and the Constitution." C. Vann Woodward's The Strange Career of Jim Crow.

May 21 -- "Justice at War: Internment of Japanese-Americans During W.W. II." Peter Irons' Justice at War.

Dr. Cole suggested the topics and the resource material. Ruth Moss found the funding organizations, wrote the grant application, arranged for posters, brochures and other publicity. **Well done, Ruth!**

Late-breaking News!
47 people (yes, forty-seven)
attended the first session
of "Advancing Justice."
That exceeds the best attendance
at last year's "Deciding Justice"

NEWS

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